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SUBJECT: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: 2009 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

REF: 09 STATE 109980

1. Dominican Republic Country report on terrorism submitted in compliance with reftel.

2. Begin Text.

While there were no reported terrorist attacks in 2009, the Dominican Republic is considered a transit point for human trafficking and contraband, which can also be exploited by suspected terrorists and extremists to Europe, Africa and within the Western Hemisphere. Since last year, some positive strides were taken by the Dominican Republic to help strengthen its legal regime and capabilities to combat terrorism, such as:

- The National Congress passed the General Counter-Terrorism Act, thereby creating the legislative framework that defines the behaviors that constitute acts of terrorism and other related acts.

- Dominican Republic is a State party to 12 of the 16 universal counter-terrorism instruments, including the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear terrorism. The four remaining conventions/protocols are in the process of being approved by the National Congress.

- In April 2009, the Dominican Republic became party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction.

- Since the Dominican Republic is a strategic point for international trade and tourism, measures were implemented by the Government in coordination with the U.S. Government to reinforce customs controls to prevent terrorist organizations from acquiring these weapons, their delivery systems and the technologies to manufacture them from persons and institutions located in the country.

The Dominican Republic in coordination with the United States and other international agencies has organized and/or participated in significant activities in the areas of strengthening, training and international cooperation to combat terrorism, such as:

- The Dominican Republic hosted a ministerial conference in February that engaged various entities of UNODC in dealing with issues related to illicit drugs, organized crime and terrorism. This conference concluded with the adoption of the Political Declaration on Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Other Serious Crimes in the Caribbean.

- The Office of the Attorney General for the Dominican Republic sponsored Specialized Training in the Prevention and Fight against Terrorism and its Financing.

- In November, law enforcement and high-level officials from the Dominican Republic took part in an UNODC Terrorism workshop in the Bahamas to examine trends, to discuss the legal framework and mechanisms of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

- In March 2009 the Dominican Republic's counter-terrorism unit known as Secretaria de Las Fuerzas Armadas Commando Especial Contra Terrorismo (SEFA-CT) is trained as part of U.S. Southern Command, Special Operations Command-South's Exercise Fused Response. Fused Response provided real world scenarios that tested the commandos' ability to perform counterterrorism type missions.

- In September, the Dominican Republic participated in a U.S. sponsored military training exercise, PANAMAX. This particular exercise was designed by U.S. Southern Command to address teamwork and to strengthen the Country's ability to operate jointly against terrorism.

- In December, DS sponsored anti-terrorism assistance training was provided to a select group of the National Police, emergency management and public service officials who are responsible for planning, coordinating, and managing emergency response and operations during a critical incident.

- As a means to improve border security, members of the Dominican specialized Border Security Force are being trained by members of the U.S. Border Patrol.

- The U.S. Embassy continues to work closely with the Government of the Dominican Republic to prevent a terrorist attack from occurring on Dominican soil, or from using the DR as a launching pad to attack the United States

While many land border, ports, and airline hubs remained permeable, the United States assisted the Dominican Republic on various initiatives to improve security, such as:

The Container Security Initiative was a positive success, which:

- Provided the Dominican Republic with the ability to use non-intrusive inspection equipment to screen high risk maritime containers that could smuggle nuclear and radioactive material into U.S. ports; and the

- Identification of Port Caucedo as a Megaport and its certification as part of the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism Initiative.

The Dominican Republic continues to lack the ability to fully control its air, land, and sea borders. As a positive step forward, the Dominican Republic continues to work with the United States to create a nation-wide biometric database base that incorporates and provides timely data from Dominican military, law enforcement, and judicial databases. Currently biometric equipment is maintained at the Headquarters of the Dominican National Police, 16 other key locations, with another 20 that will be installed at the very near future.

End Text.

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